

PRESS RELEASE

Congressman John Conyers, Jr.

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CONYERS ON PRESIDENT’S BUDGET:
“SCHOOLS FOR IRAQ, SPACESHIPS FOR MARS, AND
NOTHING FOR THE AMERICAN PEOPLE”

Congressman John Conyers, Jr., Ranking Member of the U.S. House Judiciary Committee, issued the following statement regarding today’s release of the President’s Budget for Fiscal Year 2005:

“The President has turned the American economy from bad to worse. After years of giving tax cuts for his richest friends and turning our surplus into deficits, the President is now slashing important government programs for environmental protection, education, and health care. It is clear the money for social services in Iraq and for Mars is being pried from the hands of the American people.

“The budget is particularly cold-hearted when it comes to matters that fall within the jurisdiction of the Judiciary Committee. In particular, the Community Oriented Policing Program (COPS), Violence Against Women programs, and civil rights take harsh and undue hits under the President’s proposal.

“As first responders, COPS are on the front lines of our war on terrorism; it defies logic that the President would slash funds for this important program. The President has attempted to justify cuts in the past by saying the ‘impact [of COPS-funded officers] on crime is unclear,’ totally disregarding the historic decreases in crime it brought about in the Clinton Administration. If President Bush is unclear about the benefits of COPS and community policing, he should speak with the countless local governments and police organizations that have praised COPS as an invaluable crime-fighting program.

“Second, last year, the President tried to undermine the law by keeping the Justice Department’s Violence Against Women Office in the Office of Justice Programs instead of a higher and more independent position required by Congress. Now, he is cutting the funds that victims of violence rely on to rebuild their lives. With his request, the President is thumbing his nose at victims everywhere.

“Finally, the President has shown his intent to continue his war on the Constitution. He already used the war on terrorism to shred the constitutional rights of Arab- and Muslim-Americans. This budget follows up by actually cutting money for the Justice Department’s Civil Rights Division, giving it less than it is getting now. The Administration not only took away our civil rights in terrorism cases, now it wants to take them away indefinitely.”

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